

THE GRAMOPHONE

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Prologue

IO SONO IL PROLOGO.—An apology is due to the public for inflicting upon it another review, but I should not be doing so unless I were persuaded that many of the numerous possessors of gramophones will welcome an organ of candid opinion. The critical policy of THE GRAMOPHONE will be largely personal, and as such it will be honest but not infallible, while the errors we make will be mostly on the side of kindness. If we endorse what a firm claims for its goods in our advertisement columns, we shall endorse that claim because we believe it to be justified.

The instruments on which all records sent for us to review are tested are the Orchestrphone sold by the Gramophone Exchange, an horizontal grand of His Master's Voice, and an Adams model of the Vocalion Company. The soundboxes used are the H.M.V. Exhibition No. 2, a Vocalion, a Realistic, an Ultone, a Superphone, a Sonat, and a Three Muses. If the maker of any other soundbox likes to send us his product for trial, we shall use it in competition with the others; but no opinion will be passed on any soundbox sent to us before a three months' trial. We shall try each month to keep pace with the records issued; but we hope that our readers will accept these preliminary reviews as provisional; and every three months we shall deal very critically with the output of the preceding quarter.

I have received many kind promises of support from distinguished writers; and if I find that the sales warrant me in supposing that gramophone enthusiasts want the kind of review THE GRAMOPHONE will set out to be, I can promise them that I will do my best to ensure their obtaining the finest opinions procurable.

We shall have nothing to do with Wireless in these columns. Our policy will be to encourage the recording companies to build up for generations to come a great library of good music. I do not want to waste time in announcing what we are going to do in future numbers, because I do not know yet if there is any real need for this review at all. We shall write as servants of the public, and if we sometimes take upon ourselves a certain freedom of speech in dealing with our masters, such freedom of speech is the privilege of all good servants.

Andiam ! Incominciate !

Compton Mackenzie

A ROYAL RECORD

IT has been thought advisable to delay, by a few days, the publication of the April number of *THE GRAMOPHONE*, in order that readers might be given the first authentic account of a record which Their Majesties King George and Queen Mary have been pleased to make of their Empire Day Messages to the children of the British Empire. The record was made a few weeks ago at Buckingham Palace by The Gramophone Co. The King and Queen specially desire their addresses to be heard first of all by the school children who assemble together on May 24th to celebrate Empire Day, and consequently the public will not be able to obtain the record until after that day. At the moment the Board of Education, the Colonial and India Offices are planning for the record to be distributed to the schools in the British Empire.

It is a 10in. disc, one side having Their Majesties' speeches and the other side "God Save the King" and "Home Sweet Home," played by the Band of H.M. Coldstream Guards. The price of the record will be 5/6, and all profits accruing from sales will be handed to the King for distribution amongst children's hospitals, etc.

We believe that our King and Queen are the first reigning monarchs to make a gramophone record for public issue, and it is certainly the first occasion on which a national message has been circulated through an Empire by means of a gramophone record. Thus, the fact that their Majesties have consented to have their voices recorded can be regarded by the whole gramophone industry as an honour that will raise the status of the gramophone to its highest level.

No other means are in existence by which the children of London, Inverness, Calcutta, Ottawa and Freemantle can at, say, twelve noon on Empire Day, 1923, hear speeches by their King-Emperor and Queen-Empress, delivered in their own voices; and, what is more, can hear them as many times as wished anywhere. Very few, indeed, of the many millions of British subjects have heard the King speak, and fewer have heard the Queen. In a few weeks' time everyone in our Empire will be able to obtain a record which reproduces to absolute faithfulness the voices of our Sovereign and his Consort. A wonderful thing, indeed, and a triumph for the gramophone.

This record possesses not only current interest, but has great historical value. The makers have deposited in the British Museum several copies of the record contained in hermetically sealed boxes, so that in perhaps two hundred years time, when someone will desire to know something about us living in the present year of grace, they will be able to hear the voices of our rulers. How interested we should be if we could hear speeches by Queen Elizabeth or Henry VIII!

This is a record which is bound to have a big sale. It will be circulated world-wide. Perhaps sales in the United States will exceed that in the British Isles. Who knows? We fancy that our cousins across the brook will want to possess a record of our King and Queen not only for its intrinsic interest, but because anything in the nature of a "slice of old England" rouses their emotions.

WARREN MONK.

A "JENNY LIND" CONCERT

IT is more than seventy years since Jenny Lind first sang in London the part of Alice in "Robert le Diable," and filled the house to overflowing so that "ladies constantly sat on the stairs at the Opera, unable to penetrate farther into the house." Times have changed, Wagner has sophisticated our innocence, and it is with difficulty that anyone will admit, without a blush for his bad taste, to a liking for coloratura singing. Yet in those days the street urchins would whistle "Casta Diva" where now they whistle "I ain't nobody's darling." On May 27th at the Albert Hall Miss Frieda Hempel will give us an opportunity of judging what it was that moved our grand-parents so profoundly. Dressed in the costume of 1850 she will sing, in her manner as far as possible, some of Jenny Lind's

favourite songs. As Jenny Lind lived before the days of gramophones we can never know exactly what that manner was, nor into what she was able in the end to turn her "naturally harsh and inflexible voice." It is impossible to judge how good a representation of her model Miss Hempel will give. Miss Hempel is known on the gramophone by some exquisite records such as the Cavatina from "Ernani" and "When I was Seventeen." She has a peculiarly charming and sympathetic voice and is a singer of astonishing versatility, equally at home in coloratura or lieder singing, and although probably no ladies will have to sit in the corridors of the Albert Hall unable to get nearer, a very good reception can be predicted for so brilliant an artist.

THE PRACTICAL UTILITY of CHAMBER MUSIC

I WAS reading the other day about some gramophone records that have been devised to help out physical exercises by setting them to catchy tunes, and it has struck me that the physical exercises might have been omitted and chamber music substituted for the catchy tunes. Incidentally, half the chamber music in existence has much more prehensile tunes than anything likely to be put on a gramophone record to help out physical exercises; although it seems impossible to eradicate from the waste ground of the popular mind the pernicious and weedy opinion that chamber music is dull. I am inclined to think that what is called congregational singing began the debasement of popular taste in music, which has now reached such a pitch that, unless the listener is able to hum his own vile accompaniment the instant he hears a piece of music, he considers it dull. All humming at any time is unpleasant, but when it accompanies music that is being played it is detestable.

So I began to turn over my albums of records, and I found that I could collect fifteen more or less complete pieces of chamber music. That would give two for every day of the week and one extra on Sunday evening. I suggest the following as a weekly task:—

Sunday Morning.—Mozart's Quintet in G minor—two violins, two violas and violoncello. (Col. L-1362, L-1363, L-1364.)

Sunday Evening.—Schumann's Quintet in E flat major—pianoforte, two violins, viola and violoncello. (Voc. A-0162, A-0166, A-0171, A-0173.)
Schumann's Quartet in A major. (Col. L-1199, L-1200.) Two violins, viola and violoncello.

Monday Morning.—Mozart's Trio in E flat. (Voc. D-02064, D-02015.) Violin, viola and piano.

Monday Evening.—Mozart's Trio in E major. Violin, viola and piano. (Voc. D-02064, D-02091.)

Tuesday Morning.—Mozart's Quartet in E flat major. (Col. L-1043, L-1044.)

Tuesday Evening.—Beethoven's Quartet in F major. (Col. L-1350, L-1351.) Op. 18. No. 1

Wednesday Morning.—Mozart's Quartet in B flat major. (Col. L-1330, L-1331.)

Wednesday Evening.—Beethoven's Quartet in G major. (Col. 1056, 1057.) Op. 18, No. 2.

Thursday Morning.—Mozart's Quartet in D major. (Voc. D-02013, D-02014.)

Thursday Evening.—Beethoven's Quartet in D major. (Voc. D-02004, D-02008.) Op. 18, No. 3.

Friday Morning.—Haydn's Quartet in B flat major. (Voc. D-02020, D-02039.)

Friday Evening.—Mendelssohn's Quartet in E flat major. (Voc. D-02062, D-02063.)

Saturday Morning.—Schubert's Trio in B flat major. (Voc. D-02050, D-02060.) Violin, violoncello and piano.

Saturday Evening.—Mendelssohn's Trio in D minor. Violin, violoncello and piano. (Voc. D-02044, D-02054.)

The above 32 records will cost £12, and will provide 3 hours and 26 minutes' music, which comes to very nearly a shilling a minute, and sounds expensive. I do not know what the cost of a physical exerciser is, as I am happy to say I have never had occasion to use one, but I should imagine that it would be considerably cheaper than this. At the same time, if catchy tunes are to be invoked to help the physical exercises it will add greatly to their cost, and I am sure that my selection of chamber music will do a man much more good than plunging backward and forward from two stirrups, or whatever they are called, at the end of a yard of elastic. Personally, I should recommend taking one's musical exercises before getting up in the morning and before turning over at night; but I know that a great prejudice exists in England against lying in bed for any other purpose than sleep, and so I suggest that the morning music should accompany the shave. If you lather your face during the first two movements, you will get such a lather as only barbers know how to give; and if you shave to the third movement, you will find that the last movement will last long enough for you to put your shaving things neatly away. I still think that the best way for the soul's health would be to listen quietly in bed before getting up; perhaps this leisurely attention could be granted to the Mozart quintet on Sunday morning.

Schumann's pianoforte quintet, which I have chosen for Sunday evening, has been badly cut, particularly the first movement. I cannot help feeling that it would have been better policy for the Vocalion Company to give us this work complete on three double-sided records instead of incomplete on four single-sided records.

One is often late on Monday morning, and the trio I have chosen has only three sides; it is an exquisite stream of melodies, and Monday would be robbed of half its terrors for those who played it regularly.

For the middle of the week I have chosen six typical pieces of chamber music. The three Beethoven quartets are those numbered one, two, and three of Opus 18, and if here and there they seem to hint at deeper things, generally in their

lightness and grace, they resemble Mozart. I might have devoted the whole of Friday to Haydn, because the Columbia Company have published what is known as the Hornpipe Quartet on two double-sided records (D-1443 and D-1444), and personally I much prefer it to the Mendelssohn quartet I have included, which, except for the delicious canzonetta of the second movement, I find rather dull. Saturday morning is devoted to the only Schubert trio recorded so far, but it has been severely mutilated. This trio contains at least eight separate melodies, any of which is as catchy as those melodies of the same composer which have just caught the public in "Lilac Time." One day, if I have the energy and the leisure, I shall write a musical comedy in which every tune is taken from classical chamber music. All four movements of the Mendelssohn trio chosen for Saturday evening contain melodies almost as beautiful and as catchy as those of the Schubert trio.

It is clear that the recording companies cannot go on offering music to the public at a dead loss, and I have written these few words in the hope that some of my high-brow friends will condescend to realise that THE GRAMOPHONE has not been entirely devoted to propagating Saint-Saëns on the accordion. Music is something more than a drug; it can provoke an attitude toward life, but it must be approached with a certain humility and with a determination to gain from it what others have gained. I can promise those who will make this effort to circumvent the great bogey of dulness that guards the treasure that, if they will buy the fifteen pieces of chamber music recommended and

play each piece once a week for a year, they will look back to their musical appreciation before they made this experiment with horror, shame, and remorse. I am not asking them to give themselves the trouble to acquire any technical appreciation, but merely to saturate themselves in melodious sound as they saturate themselves in warm baths. No appreciation of drainage is necessary for the appreciation of a warm bath; and I do not believe that any appreciation beyond an ability to recognise the simplicity, the sensuousness, and the passion that Keats demanded from great poetry is necessary. Do let us have a little humility. This is an age of short cuts and swift transit; but there is no reason why our methods of dealing with space should be extended to our mental adventures with art. Formerly, a day without music was considered a day wasted. I was reading the other day of a lieutenant-governor who, in the early part of the seventeenth century, visited the island where I live on a hunting expedition. His two boys wanted to cross over from Guernsey with him and spend the day picnicing and bathing in one of the coves. Permission was granted by their father on condition that they did not miss their music lesson, and after an hour's madrigal singing on the beach they were allowed to enjoy themselves for the rest of that summer day. In 1923 the wretched children would only be allowed to enjoy themselves if they promised not to miss their practical chemistry or their book-keeping by double entry or some such other confounded short-cut to what is called earning a living.

C. M.

PIANO RECORDING

Mark Hambourg

I AM of the opinion that though the gramophone has made such immense strides in the development of its possibilities since it made its entry into an astonished world, some five and twenty years ago, it has not yet anything like attained the limit of its usefulness and advantages to mankind. When I remember what my first records sounded like 20 years ago, at the time when it seemed hopeless to succeed in producing anything of the nature of pianoforte tone, and now, listening to the latest ones which I have just done this winter, it appears to me almost incredible how much has been done to improve matters. In old days all pianoforte tone as reproduced on the gramophone sounded like the tinkling of a very inferior banjo or guitar. There was apparently no way of getting the round, mellow softness, or the deep pulsating loudness of the

modern pianoforte tone. But the latest records have really done away with the jingling sound, and though still lacking in the depth of sonority produced, yet the true quality of pianoforte tone is almost present. From this successful progress in tone production by the gramophone, I judge that the future possibilities of pianoforte records may be most interesting, both from the point of view of history, and education. Educationally, because I think that it will be soon not only possible but practical to be able to give lessons, both to professionals and amateurs, by means of the gramophone, and certainly that would be a great improvement on lessons given entirely by correspondence, for instance, as is much the practice to-day. The pupil will have the advantage of being able to hear exactly what the teacher means, even if he is not

present, by the help of a record; whilst the young student can study the renderings of great works by the different masters of his instrument. Of course, some people say that this last will not be so good a thing for artists, as it may prevent many from attending their concerts who might otherwise make a point of going, because they can hear the same performance on a record at home. I myself do not believe this. On the contrary, I think that the interest awakened by hearing the master's record will generally stimulate the student to go and verify his impression by personal experience.

Of course, even now, pianoforte records are not all good; they vary tremendously, and sometimes they are still disappointing. But this is not, I imagine, the fault of the gramophone recording instrument. It lies rather in the shortcomings of the piano itself, which is mechanically imperfect, and suffers very much from overtones, which are difficult to get rid of on the recording machine. The gramophone on the other hand is most exact, and reproduces without any palliative precisely everything that it hears. Moreover, this exactitude of the reproduction turns playing for recording purposes into a nerve-racking occupation. For the feeling of the invisible detective watching, and shadowing as it were, every note played, simply strings the wretched performer up to desperation, especially if he is recording some new work with which he is not supremely familiar. Then, when the false note emerges, glaring baldly and shamelessly out in all its nakedness, undimmed by the shadow of the kindly pedal, "Da capo" commences! Over and over again the piece has to be repeated, often three or four times, in the endeavour to obtain that absolute technical perfection which is so difficult for mere man to present, and yet seems child's play to the machine! And how irritating is this constant repetition! I well remember once I made the fatal mistake of taking a friend down with me to Hayes, knowing that it would interest him to hear the recording and see how it was done. I was playing a very modern piece, difficult both technically and musically. Four times I had repeated it, and each time there had been overtones, or a crash, or a wrong note, or one of the thousand things that spoil a record. Eventually, the fifth time it went through perfectly, and as the final note was struck, my

friend exclaimed enthusiastically in a loud voice: "Hurrah! at last it's perfect!" Alas! he had forgotten in his relief that the instrument goes on recording for two or three seconds after the piece is timed to end, in order to be sure to have the whole work well within the record. Before those two or three extra seconds are over no one present is allowed to speak, the operator calling out "All right" when the machine stops. My friend had quite forgotten about this, and his exclamation therefore had been recorded by the faithful instrument right on at the end of my piece! And all over again, a sixth time I had to play it! No more friends for me in the recording room!

I am always worn out after a morning of doing records, and think it the most fatiguing work I know, what with the nervous tension and the incessant repeating.

And now I must say that I have found the gramophone a wonderful propagandist for good music. Time after time, especially since the war, I have met people not only from the more cultured classes, but also from amongst the humblest, who have come and said to me: "While we were in France we used to play your record of the Beethoven 'Moonlight' Sonata every evening; it was our favourite record, and next time you play that piece at a concert in our neighbourhood, we are looking forward to going to hear it again." That is a wonderful testimonial to the work of the gramophone, and

is also why I consider it of first-rate importance for musicians when doing records, not only to aim at amusing the "tired business man," but always to make a point of recording the very best music. By so doing, they will be endeavouring ever to educate, and stimulate the interest of those who cannot afford any other musical pleasure than that of possessing one or two good gramophone records. To popularise the finest music is to my mind one of the greatest services which the gramophone can render to the world, and in steadily pursuing this aim in their work with the recording instrument, all serious musical artists are serving in a common good cause, to their own and everyone else's advantage.

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Photo: Navana

Mark Hambourg

A MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

By Compton Mackenzie

ONE of the most interesting books published in recent years is *A Musical Pilgrim's Progress*, by J. D. M. Rorke, in which the author records with much subtlety and no little eloquence of style his adventures in music. I propose to follow in his footsteps, less out of vanity and egotism, I hope, than because I am a great sinner, and like St. Augustine of Hippo I feel I ought to pillory myself as a warning and an encouragement to the public. I beg of any man of taste who may put himself to the trouble of reading this confession to remember the mortification I must have inflicted upon myself and extend to me his charity. Most people's confessions are interesting; some, like *The Confessions* of Rousseau or *The Diary of a Disappointed Man*, are revoltingly interesting. In a musical self-revelation the only blushes I shall kindle will be upon my own cheeks. I firmly believe, as I hope for salvation, that not the most insensate Freudian will be able to make of my revelations a case; but, of course, there is no knowing in these days to what dark abysses of primordial lust one's simplest behaviour may not be traced.

My earliest recollection of music dates to a month or so before my second birthday; and I hear, more remotely fine than the squeak of a bat, the faint crooning of nursery rhymes (H.M.V. C-911, C-912, C-913, C-914; Columbia 2990, 2991; Pathé 1120, 1121; Zon. 1700). But the pictures of those nursery rhymes are much more vivid to me now than the tunes to which they were sung; and I fancy that I must have soon tired of the singing, because before I was two years old I had learnt them all by heart and preferred reading them to myself to having them sung. In fact, that was the way I learnt to read, and before I was two-and-a-half I could read anything without the least difficulty, so that I did not care to be read to, and even to this day that prejudice survives.

My first memory of a musical instrument is of the Pan-pipes played by a Punch and Judy showman at Lowestoft, followed immediately by the appearance of Punch, an apparition that affected me with such horror that I was led shrieking from the sands. I must have been two years and eight months old then. The sound of Pan-pipes still affects me with a foreboding of some sinister event about to happen; and even now I never get from the *cor anglais* or the oboe the pastoral atmosphere I ought to get. Very soon after this experience with the pipes, on being taken to church by my mother

for the first time in the town of West Hartlepool, where nearly three years earlier I had been born, I was invited by her to be silent and to listen to the organ.

"Organ?" I repeated incredulously; "Organ, but where is the monkey?"

This story is by now a desiccated chestnut, but I was the genuine originator of it. Clearly at that period sound did not mean much unless accompanied by some outward pictorial symbol.

The next musical impression I have is of sitting on a wet day at a window of our house in London and of watching a very ragged boy swinging along in the rain and whistling. His tune spoke to me in some magical way of freedom. As I see him now, for all it was raining so fast, he was only wearing a pair of knickerbockers and a shirt, and there were only two buttons to those knickerbockers, but he was wearing braces. At the time my own knickerbockers were still kept up by a curious apparatus of red flannel, rather like little girls' stays. I remember my envy of those braces and the feeling that I would exchange everything—my parents, my aunts, my toys—to be swinging along whistling like that ragged boy and to be wearing braces instead of scarlet stays. I wish I knew what tune he was whistling, but it struck upon my soul like the *Marseillaise*. About this period, and for two or three years afterwards, music was the way I could always restore my courage, my faith in the ultimate triumph of right, and my self-confidence. I was in the power of an old nurse who resembled the witch in *Hänsel and Gretel* or *Rapunzel*. She had a queer habit of making me go for long walks by myself from the time I was five until I was six or seven. We lived then in Avonmore Road, and my task was to walk thence as far as Earl's Court Road. This for a grown-up person walking fast is a ten minutes' walk; for a child of my age it must have meant at least three-quarters of an hour. I used to support myself against my various terrors of being captured by gypsies, Fagins, and circus-proprietors by humming to myself all the way, and I am pretty sure that the song that I hummed most was one called *White wings, they never grow weary*, which gave me my first spiritual uplift. *Hi-Tiddly-Hi-Ti* was a favourite about this period and was usefully optimistic: then there was *Get your hair cut*, which had a frightening second line: *There's a barber round the corner, and he's waiting for the order*. This, I remember, struck me as an appalling thought, and

the melody, which was a catchy one, gave me little pleasure in consequence. I remember that one day from one of the doors of a terrace opposite Holland House (now I believe about to be pulled down for a super-cinema) I saw a coffin being carried out on the backs of six sombre men. I remember clearly that I hummed louder than ever, and I should hazard that only *Hi-Tiddly-Hi-Ti* would have been encouraging enough to deal with this dreadful vision. My enemies the reed pipes appeared again, played now by an extraordinary old man who wore a moleskin cap with no peak, a bright red waistcoat, and a very long tailcoat. But the strangest thing about him was that he was covered with white rats and mice. I was perfectly certain that he was the Pied Piper of Hamelin, and I expected every moment to be charmed away by his playing to that mysterious cave from which the children of Hamelin never returned. Even to this day there is a certain type of clean-shaven old gentleman with silvery stubble on his chin who affects me with a kind of sub-conscious fright. Actually, this particular old man had a benevolent face as I remember it; and if somebody had explained to me that he was not the Pied Piper of Hamelin, no doubt I should have been attracted to him. I seem to remember that he had with him a dog of the Toby type with a frilled collar round its neck; but of this I cannot be sure. If he had, he would be still more closely linked on to my terror of the Punch and Judy show.

The next musical figure that recurs to my memory is a gentleman who played simultaneously a drum, a pair of cymbals, a penny whistle, and some kind of a barrel organ. Yes, and a triangle and bells on the top of his hat. I see them now. I believe such a combination of instruments has a technical name—is it panharmonicon? But I know that he was to me the Great Panjandrum, and I could never understand why in Caldecott's illustrations of the Great Panjandrum he appeared as an angry school-master.

Somewhere about this period I went to Portsmouth, and a military band filled my imagination for the first time. It was a Sunday morning, and I remember looking out of a window on the ground floor in a narrow street and seeing the Royal Artillery march past on their way to church. I remember the exceptional pleasure that the knobs on their helmets gave me as distinct from the spikes of the Line regiments. To this day, when I hear a military band, I associate the sound with the blue of the Artillery uniform rather than with red as most people would, and with those brass knobs bobbing and glittering in the sunlight of a fine summer morning.

Now to try to recapture some more of the songs that remain in my mind from those early years. I remember sitting in a stage box on the prompt

side of Drury Lane Theatre and enjoying very much Marie Lloyd's rendering of *Ta-ra-ra-boom-deay!* but at the same time being rather overcome by the abandon with which she kicked up her legs and displayed so much amber silk petticoat. I remember Harry Payne, the famous clown, came into the back of the box, all dressed up ready to go on for the Harlequinade, and my turning to him and saying how much I had enjoyed the song, but evidently giving him the impression by the way he laughed that I was doubtful of the propriety of Marie Lloyd's dancing. I suppose that some wiseacre will write and tell me—if I do not anticipate him—that it was Lottie Collins who danced and sang *Ta-ra-ra-boom-deay!* This is true, so far as the music halls were concerned, but Marie Lloyd danced and sang it at Drury Lane. As I write, I remember now another song from an earlier pantomime, *The Forty Thieves*, in about 1887, when the demon king came on and sang: *Hush, hush, hush, here comes the bogey man, Be on your best behaviour, for he'll catch you if he can!* He didn't catch me, for I was led out of the box yelling at the top of my voice, and when I was quiet and had been taken back, Charles Lauri, playing a monkey, climbed up from the stage and ran along the plush-covered parapet of the circle, which set me off yelling again.

I remember my father singing to me: *He might have been a Russian, an Austrian, or a Prussian*, from one of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, I think; and I could never understand why anybody should ever have the least temptation to belong to any other nation, and why the fact of a man's remaining an Englishman should be worth singing about. The tune, however, fascinated me; and I should say that for the first time perhaps in this song my critical faculties were roused to discriminate between the words and the music, for while the words struck me as definitely idiotic, the tune pleased, so that I was glad to hear my father sing it as often as he would.

During this period I embarked on my first adventures in the executant side of music at the Kindergarten I attended. Here I sat in a stuffy little room, the kind of room that dentists love to choose for their deadly work, and played the treble in a series of duets known as *Diabelli's Exercises*. I remember my mistress, a lean, red-faced young woman with blue hands, getting very much annoyed whenever, in the course of our joint effort, my left hand collided with her right, and I remember thinking how unreasonable her annoyance was and how much more unpleasant it was for me to touch her clammy hand than for her to touch my warm one. It seems to me now that in the earliest exercises all the treble part was written for minims and entirely devoted to the space notes F, A, C, and E. I can remember that the minim presented itself to me as a face, a curious, fat, humpty-dumpty

kind of a face which was always going to be attacked by black goblins, which were the crotchets and quavers I could see over my left shoulder in the bass that was being played by my red-faced mistress. I remember hearing somebody described as crotchety and having a vision of a horrible little black woman jumping about like a quaver in the bass. The treble compared with the bass seemed to me an extraordinarily safe part of the world, and I could not understand why it should have such a complicated and vicious-looking shell to indicate it, and why the menacing and unimaginably difficult bass should have a C, which being my favourite letter of the alphabet struck me as unsuitable for such an evil part of the world as the bass. Probably some of this was due to my having heard the word base in moral reprobation. As well as being faces, I used to think that these minims, oh yes, and semibreves, I had forgotten the semibreves, which I laboriously played, were pieces of silver money, and I remember hearing a person speak of somebody's silvery treble and wondering to myself how this person had pierced one of my greatest secrets. Then there came the fatal day when my mistress informed me that I must begin the bass clef. I do not think I should have felt more frightened if she had told me that she was going to fling me from

the top of Beachy Head into the sea. Simultaneously with being introduced to the bass clef, I was introduced to the crotchet; and the real misery of learning the piano began. I left behind me friendly E G B D F, so like a boy's name, and friendly F A C E and wrestled with the demon G B D F E and that queer poisonous nut A C E G. The crotchets were now nuts; evidently the association was between nutmeg and aceg. *Procul, o procul este, profani!* Freudians avault!

I am naturally left-handed, and if only I could have been tactfully and solicitously introduced to that accursed bass clef, I might have enjoyed music long before I did; but for years it was to be my bane, and to this day, when I can read by sight quite complicated passages in the treble, I have to spell out the bass with as much difficulty as I used to spell it out then. From this time on, for several years, music stands in my memory for getting up early in the morning and sitting on a piano stool and what is called practising. This purgatory endured from the year 1887 to the year 1897, and all that remains to me now for those endless hours of boredom is the ability to play atrociously ten bars of an infamous composition called the *Retreat March*.

(To be continued.)

LIST of SELECTED RECORDS—I.

ONE of the commonest complaints of the gramophone enthusiasts is that it is very difficult to know what records to buy; and although the extreme patience and obligingness of the attendants in many of the large shops in allowing the public to listen to records often makes things easier, one is by no means certain of finding such civility. It is proposed to publish each month a list of about a dozen records, every one of which is excellent in its own way. We do not pretend to cater for all tastes. We shall include no record which we do not consider to have some merit as a work of art, and none which are not well recorded. It should be quite easy for anyone to make a selection from our monthly lists to suit his own particular taste, and to be at the same time fairly certain of getting a first-rate record. In this way a good library of gramophone music could gradually be built up. No records later than the beginning of the current year will be included in this select list, since details about the more recent records can be obtained from our monthly reviews and from our quarterly retrospect.

H.M.V.—2-07920, 2-07918, 2-07922.—Kreiser and Zimbalist (Two Violins, with String Quartet). *Concerto for two Violins* (Bach).

VOCALION.—J.04030.—*Après midi d'un Faune* (Aeolian Orchestra) (Debussy).

H.M.V.—2-053198.—Galli-Curci (Soprano), *Come per me sereno*, from "La Sonnambula" (Bellini).

COLUMBIA.—7164.—Stracciari (Baritone), *Il balen de suo Sorriso*, from "Il Trovatore" (Verdi).

H.M.V.—D.491.—Mrs. Gordon Woodhouse (Harpsichord), *Fugues in D minor and E minor* (Bach).

FONOTIPIA.—92224, 92225.—Didur (Bass), *Voi che del Dio vivente*, from "L'Ebreo" (Halevy). *Infelice e tuo credevi*, from "Ernani" (Verdi).

COLUMBIA.—7230.—Stralia (Soprano), *Non mir dir*, from "Don Giovanni" (Mozart).

VOCALION.—D.02013, D.02014.—London String Quartet, *Quartet in D* (Mozart).

H.M.V.—2-052216.—Fleta (Tenor), *Il fiore che avevi*, from "Carmen" (Bizet).

COLUMBIA.—L.1432.—Busoni (Piano), *Nocturne in F sharp* (Chopin). *Etude in G flat* (Chopin).

J. CASKETT.

GOOD SINGING

IT is only the first-rate that can hold its own on the gramophone. The perfectly placed voice is a mystic thing that floats on the breath like a celluloid ball on a jet of water. It is neither in the throat nor in the nose, but outside the lips, where it remains immovable. Imperfect production sometimes achieves the right place, but with any increase of volume or ascent up the scale the voice is liable to bolt into the throat like a rabbit into a burrow, which naturally leads to discrepancy of tone. A throaty voice is hopeless for reproduction. It is, alas, only too prevalent among English singers, whose national tendency is to imprison the voice among the vocal cords, whence it struggles in vain to escape. Some have fortunately studied *bel canto* in Italy, best of all in Milan, and the benefit of the latter for an English singer cannot be over-estimated, for there, if anywhere, he or she will get the opera sense, a very different thing from the oratorio sense which pervades the British opera stage at present. He will also lay the foundation of his career with a properly placed voice, and he is then free to exercise his natural good taste and avoid the scoops and tremolos that disfigure so much Italian singing. Until he forgets that he has a throat no singer should sing for the gramophone, as the result is always painful. Listen to Galli-Curci, McCormack, or De Luca, and see if you can detect a trace of throat. Years of patient study have given them that smoothness and evenness of tone that makes singing seem the easiest thing in the world, and that is what it ought to sound like. One sympathises with the hard-working performer whose encounters with his high notes bring the sweat to his brow and a tight feeling in the throats of his audience, but one cannot like him. There may be people, and I believe are, who like to see the works, and to these possibly this type of singer appeals, just as they like to see an actor rant, because then they are sure he is acting, and feel that they are getting their money's worth. A singer who sings without any apparent effort at a

concert may be a disappointment to them, but I cannot believe they would not appreciate the perfection of these three artists' voices on the gramophone when they are free from the lure of perspiration and swelling throat muscles, and can concentrate on the music alone.

Strong dramatic songs seldom come off on the gramophone. It is almost impossible to convey drama through a soundbox. A brilliant exception is, of course, Chaliapine in Boris, but his stupendous personality and sense of the stage would penetrate more than mere wax, vulcanite and shellac. Personally I enjoy *coloratura* and *lieder* records most of all, though on the stage I find *coloratura* rather boring. Listening to the average contralto on the gramophone is like entering a harbour in a fog. Madame Louise Homer is the only artist I have so far heard who proves in her beautiful singing that it is possible even for a contralto to ascend the scale without her voice apparently jumping through a hoop half-way up.

There is no test more severe for the human voice than the gramophone. It stands revealed. Bluff and *truc*, those two stout allies of the second-rate performer, cannot penetrate the numerous processes of a record; nor can personal magnetism, on which so many popular singers almost entirely depend, nor can the hypnotic current, along which imperfect phrases and ill-begotten notes are wafted across enthusiastic and deluded audiences. How often, soberly returning home from the recital of some fashionable singer, your hands aching with applause, have you not said to yourself, freed from his distracting personality: "But surely that rendering of 'L'Heure Exquise' was a little too much of a good thing, and the interpretation of one of Schumann's most moving songs was anything but traditional—in fact, now I come to think of it coldly, in shocking bad taste!" You have been hit below the belt, and you resent it.

But the worst of it is, that while it lasted you thoroughly enjoyed it.

F SHARP

A SCHOOL of SALESMANSHIP

IF the public is to have its taste improved by the gramophone, it must be encouraged not only by papers like the present *Review*, but by the dealers themselves, to buy records distinguished by musical merit. It is most desirable that salesmen should possess some knowledge of music as well as a knowledge of the art of salesmanship, in order to gain the confidence of their customers. The School of Salesmanship recently inaugurated by the Gramo-

phone Company is intended precisely to meet this want. The school curriculum includes a course of lectures on musical appreciation given by an experienced musician who has at the same time a wide experience of the gramophone industry. The selling of a gramophone record presents a special problem. Many buyers will come to rely on the judgment of a competent salesman and to treat him as a guide, philosopher and friend.

HOW TO START A GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

Wm. J. Rogers,

Hon. Secretary of the Glasgow and District Gramophone Society

THE Gramophone Society movement has now attained to considerable proportions. It is true to say that there is not now a town of first-class importance that does not possess within its walls such a society. I am frequently being written to from all parts of the country—once indeed from so far away as Auckland, New Zealand—asking for information as to “how it is done.” My own experience of the movement is not a year old, yet so great has been the success which the Glasgow Society has achieved that friends in other parts are eager to possess the talisman which has worked such wonders up here.

It is interesting to think that prior to last September there was not such a society in our city, and now nearly 250 people have joined and are backing up our movement. I am convinced that if the fundamental simplicity of commencing a society were more generally known there would be founded throughout the country nearly as many societies again as exist already. As far as my own experience goes it seems to me that the majority of places are just ripe for the commencement of a gramophone society. The gramophone has lingered too long under the shadow of contempt and public ridicule, and the establishment of gramophone societies is the first step towards raising our instrument in the estimation of the public and awarding to it its rightful place amongst musical instruments.

A brief résumé of the history of the founding of my own society will be the quickest way of setting forth the elements of success in this particular kind of work. Last July I wrote a letter to a prominent musical paper interested in the gramophone, suggesting that the formation of a society in Glasgow was long overdue, and further offering to do what I could to found such a society if others likewise interested would support me. I received in all four replies to this initial letter. I then arranged for these gentlemen to meet me at a convenient spot, and we there and then set up an Interim Committee to discuss ways and means of bringing the society into being.

The first thing which naturally arose and which really bulks larger in the public mind than it needs to, was the question of finance. We decided what the subscription should be for membership, and then “called in” our own subscriptions in order to give

the treasurer something to play with. The next part of our programme consisted of “booming” the society. We had a dozen showcards artistically printed by a local signwriter for the sum of, I think, 15/-. These cards were distributed among the different dealers in the city, who kindly agreed to display them prominently for us. On these showcards we set forth the aims of the society and also the place at which the first public meeting was to be held, with a strong invitation for all interested to be present. We then had circular-leaflets printed at the cost of about 25/-, setting forth a skeleton syllabus for the first session, and also giving the names of the Office Bearers, who had been appointed by the Interim Committee. I believe that the total sum expended in initiating our campaign did not exceed £2 10s., so that financially it was not very ruinous. One thing that helped us greatly at first was that we were able to put very good names on our circulars. Our President, Mr. Percy Gordon, who is the Musical Critic of the *Glasgow Herald*, the most important daily paper in Scotland, allowed us to use his name from the very start as the prospective President of our Society, besides getting space for us in the Press.

The whole of our campaigning was designed to lead up to a final public meeting at which both Mr. Gordon and I spoke setting forth the aims of the society, etc. Our membership on that first night alone totalled 123. Since then things have gone on triumphantly.

It would seem to me on reviewing the past that several things are essential in founding a society. The first is, of course, enthusiasm. The second is effective advertising—making yourself known, ringing all the bells in the neighbourhood. The third is to get people in musical circles interested in the movement. The fourth, and by no means the least, both immediately and for the future, is to get the gramophone traders themselves behind you. In all these vital respects we, in Glasgow, have been most fortunate. A secondary consideration, but one which I have found to be of considerable weight, is to get really comfortable premises for the meetings. The days of hard forms are numbered. Another thing of importance also is to keep the subscription as low as possible. Five shillings, in my estimation, is quite sufficient. We charge 3/6 for ladies and have,

I am pleased to say, an exceptionally strong lady membership. A tip for budding societies—the ladies appreciate good things, cheap.

The problems that confront a new society are largely conditioned by its membership. A society with a large membership will find members' nights a bit of a problem. In a smaller society the members' nights will be much easier to arrange. A special feature should be made of demonstrations of the latest records, also frequent displays should be given

of new machines, appliances, etc., etc., and generally it is very necessary for gramophone societies to keep up with the times.

Ours is an expanding inheritance. Sound reproduction is an ever advancing science. Every new step on the road to perfection creates opportunities and interests for the alert gramophone societies. We do not look into the past for our sustenance. The harvest is being sown all the time; it is for us to reap the crops as they ripen.

Gramophone Societies' Reports

THE BRIXTON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

A FEATURE of the programmes at our April meeting was the good proportion of orchestral items introduced by both the concert givers, Messrs. Fisher and Glazier, and it would be as well if these were taken and commented upon in "bulk." First of all, being a lover of the music of Coleridge Taylor, Mr. Fisher gave the Ballet Music from "Hiawatha," this, a recently published arrangement for orchestra, is here admirably played by the New Queen's Hall Orchestra. It is a matter of interest that this version as recorded is practically complete, and gives a delightful idea of this lamented composer's conception. From his African descent came that sympathy with the American-Indian idiom which he so successfully wove into this cantata.

Two records that deserve comparison are Sir Alexander Mackenzie's "Britannia" Overture, and that of Edward German to "Henry VIII." Here we get that essentially English atmosphere differently treated by both composers; the one combining old songs in a modern setting, the other seeking to portray the spirit of Shakespeare's play, and from its character, slightly more serious than the remainder of the incidental music, the whole of which was written for Sir Henry Irving's production at the Lyceum in the early nineties.

Other charming music is Humperdinck's "Hänsel und Gretel," founded on one of Grimm's fairy tales, and the "Witch's Ride," as played by the British Symphony Orchestra, is a realistic bizarre portrayal of this scene in the opera.

When we consider the orchestral resources at the disposal of earlier composers, it is interesting to consider how well they succeeded, and also to compare their results with those of later comers. Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony shows us how his genius overcame his limitations in this respect, and, although scored for a comparatively small

orchestra, his designs are brought to fruition in a manner perhaps impossible in a lesser man than he was. In the First Movement, we get an insight into his manner which was to obtain a much greater outlet in the later Symphony in C minor. As a contrast, the "Crown Diamonds" Overture of Auber showed us music altogether on another plane. Here the characteristic melodic vein of the "Opera Bouffe" of the early part of last century, of which Auber was so outstanding an exponent, had a very cheerful rendering by the London Symphony Orchestra under Goossens, and was a welcome change to the old single-sided indifferent band records of years ago, when so-called "overtures" were sadly maltreated. "Shamus O'Brien," Sir Charles Stanford's Irish comic opera, is unfamiliar to many, and the Overture, played by the Halle Orchestra, is a good example of his style. It is founded on folk tunes, one of which, generally known as "Father O'Flynn," is used in the song of that name. As if to chide us for listening to such "old-fashioned" stuff, there burst upon us a modern of the moderns in the person (metaphorically speaking) of Gustav Holst, and the fourth number of his Suite, "The Planets," entitled "Jupiter," fully deserved the courage of the Columbia Company in issuing it, and the "tune" in the middle must surely rank with "Land of Hope and Glory." The orchestral items having received their encomiums, it now remains to look at the vocal. No greater contrast could be imagined than Loewe's "Edward," and the "Four Cautionary Tales and a Moral" of Liza Lehmann. In the former, Norman Allin exhibits a side of his art that many must have been unfamiliar with, and shows to what heights recording now reaches; such a subject for recording would have been undreamt of a few years ago, unless in Germany. If the Columbia Company do not wish to perpetrate an injustice, they will not fail to get Mr. Allin to record the "Erl King" and "When the King went forth to War." "The Tales" are

(Continued on page 12)

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GRAMOPHONE SOCIETIES' REPORTS (continued from page 11)

splendid specimens, not only of nonsense verses, but their correct presentation in musical form, and Mr. Williams makes excellent play with their spirit. Incidentally, he makes himself understood.

At our next meeting on May 5th, Mr. Webb, the President of the South London Society, will demonstrate his "Kestraphone," and also give a short lecture on the "Development of the Sound Box," illustrated by diagrams and anatomical specimens.

It should be noted that all enquiries regarding the Society should be addressed to Mr. J. T. Fisher, 28A, Fieldhouse Road, Emmanuel Road, Balham, S.W. 12.

S. F. D. HOWARTH,
Recording Secretary.

THE SOUTH EAST LONDON
MUSIC SOCIETY

OUR Concert for the month of March consisted of a "Popular Light Programme," and embraced items by the following orchestras, instrumentalists and vocalists: London Symphony, Royal Albert Hall and British Symphony; Kreisler and Heifetz; Galli-Curci and McCormack. The orchestral selections included such popular favourites as "Praeludium," Overture "Oberon," Prelude "Susannah's Secret," etc., etc. I should like to mention one item which I think should be in the collection of every orchestral enthusiast, and that is "The Witches' Ride" ("Hänsel und Gretel"), Humperdinck, played by the British Symphony Orchestra. Heifetz received the usual ovation on his playing "The Dance of the Goblins" and "Tarantella." Kreisler captivated us by his beautiful renderings of "Caprice Viennois" and the *obbligato* to "Le Nil," the singer being McCormack. Galli-Curci contributed greatly to the success of the evening by the following song and arias: "Lo, hear the Gentle Lark," "Charming Bird" ("The Pearl of Brazil") and "The Shadow Song" ("Dinorah").

Readers of THE GRAMOPHONE residing in South East London will no doubt be interested to know that our programmes embrace concerts of every description, and that, furthermore, we make a point of including in our programmes, whenever possible, items by the most advanced of the modern composers. Our April concert will be given over entirely to modern works, and included in the programme are compositions by Bantock, Holst, Bliss, Ravel, Scriabin, Palmgren, etc., etc. Lovers of music are invited to communicate with the Secretary (enclosing a stamped envelope) at 2, Henslowe Road, East Dulwich, S.E. 22, who will be only too pleased to forward full particulars of the Society.

HARRIE KING.

GLASGOW AND DISTRICT
GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

THURSDAY, 29th March. As announced Mr. Percy Gordon, Mus.Bac., L.R.A.M., our President, delivered his lecture on "Musical Composition—Some Tricks of the Trade," with illustrations by means of Gramophone records and also on the piano. The lecture was packed full of the most interesting material and would really need to be listened to several times to be fully appreciated. Put briefly, Mr. Gordon's intention was to outline the way in which melodies are put together; how composers make pieces up from one melody built up in different ways; how, in orchestral work, the orchestra is used in varying ways for the reproduction of the central theme, and also by what manner of means and "tricks" composers manage to hold the attention and interest of their audience. The records which he had selected were of particular interest, and the interest was considerably heightened by the illuminative criticisms which Mr. Gordon gave of the different records after they had been played. The instrument on which the records were played was a cabinet H.M.V. which, along with the records, was kindly supplied by Messrs. Alex. Biggar. The piano, a handsome Chappell upright, was supplied by Messrs. Murdoch McKillop & Co., Ltd., to whom, along with Messrs. Biggar, the Society are very much indebted. The meeting closed with a very hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Gordon for his splendid and inspiring address. Next meeting, demonstration of latest records by Messrs. Paterson, Sons & Co., Ltd., April 10th.

W. J. ROGERS,

Hon. Secretary.

TYNESIDE GRAMOPHONE AND
PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 26th, 1923.—As Messrs. Graham and Young were unable to give an Æolian Vocalion night as arranged, Mr. Linzey Willcox filled the gap with an Edison Cylinder demonstration. A Home phono (eighteen years old) was used with floating reproducer and 30in. brass horn. All records were very well received except two Damberols, which were hailed with derision. The whole suites of "Casse Noisette" and "Ballet Russe" were given. Frank Croxton, in the "Gypsy Love Song" and "List the Cherubic Host," were unknown to our members and were thought excellent.

March 12th, 1923.—A comparative test of records was made. Winners, Scala, Imperial, etc., etc., and many excellent recordings were heard.

March 19th, 1923.—A special wireless demonstration was given before our members by Mr. Chase, of The Chase Radio Company, Newcastle. A 30ft. single inside aerial was used with a three-valve set and an "Amplion" loud speaker. Owing to three other wireless demonstrations being given by the C.R. Co. in this locality the same night, Mr. Chase was unable to let us have a Western Electric Amplifier, which he hopes we will hear on some future occasion. The Amplion was not large enough for the purpose, but some of the 5 N.O. items were received splendidly. However, atmospherics and trams were very much in evidence, and if the reception was not perfect a great deal of amusement was created by the howlings from local re-action circuits. To the uninitiated these howls caused roars of laughter, but to the demonstrator and the wireless members curses were the order of the day.

March 26th, 1923.—Messrs. Alderson and Brentnall gave us an excellent demonstration of H.M.V. records. Special mention must be made of a song, "The Green Hills o' Somerset," sung by Carmen Hill. Played with a soft needle it was very beautiful. "La Villanelle," Galli-Curci, was magnificent, and "Quartet in D Major," by the Catteral Quartet, was very good. A 'cello solo, "Le Cygne," played by C. Sharp, was very fine, and "The Gnomes' March," by the Coldstream Guards, was very good, indeed, and true to tone. The late Caruso, singing "Ombra mai fu" (Handel's "Largo"), was received with mixed feelings; the glorious voice being so perfectly reproduced made us realise the deep loss the world has sustained in the death of the great artist.

L. A. WILLCOX,

Secretary.

A REVIEW of THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1923

A REVIEW of the records issued during the first quarter of 1923 has one disquieting feature. The Vocalion Company, which throughout 1921 and 1922 had scarcely failed to provide every month something for lovers of chamber music, has during the whole of these three months issued only one record of chamber music. This is the completion of the Mozart Trio in E major, arranged by Lionel Tertis for violin, viola, and pianoforte. It is a beautiful record, but it has a horrible scratch. I do hope that the Vocalion Company will pay attention to this scratch of theirs. I should have had to give up playing their chamber music on steel, if the introduction of the Sympathetic Chromic needle had not done a great deal to relieve the situation. I most cordially recommend this needle to all lovers of chamber music; and though I have not been able to substantiate the makers' claim that it will always play twenty records with each point, I find that it can be relied upon to play fifteen. It has less scratch than fibre, and the tone is sweeter except when large sound-boxes like the Superphone or Astra, which show off fibre needles at their best, are used.

In my opinion by far the most encouraging product of the first quarter of 1923 is the new wax that the Columbia Company is using for all its records. When playing with the loudest needle I possess, the Cleopatra, there is less scratch on the new Columbia records than there used to be on their old records with the softest needle in existence.

Moreover, what scratch there is has no quality of harshness, and is not much more than the light crackle of a gently burning fire. The two records (L-1460 and L-1465) they have produced of the Lener Quartet of Budapest are really superb; apart from the almost noiseless wax, the recording is magnificent and the interpretation of a linked sweetness. It is extraordinarily interesting to compare their rendering of the *Lento* from the Dvořák Quartet in F minor with the Flonzaley rendering (H.M.V. 08096). At first I thought that I preferred the Flonzaley, and now I am inclined to think that I prefer the Lener. If a purchaser cannot afford both and has to choose between them, I advise him to buy the Columbia record, because he will get on the other side the *Andante Cantabile* from Haydn's Quartet in F major. This is another great piece of recording; but wonderful as the *pizzicati* are, I rather resent wasting a whole record of chamber music on what is practically a solo for the first violin. This sounds a little ungrateful, and if only the Columbia will give us plenty more records of the Lener Quartet I shall retract this mild grumble. I advise anybody who has not yet acquired either of these records to buy L-1460 first. The 'cello work in the *Allegro* from the Mozart Quartet in G major is amazing—if the epithet still possesses any significance in these days when it is used by the popular press to describe a woman's discovery of a boot-button in a tram. As for the *Andante* from Schubert's Quartet in D minor, words fail me

to say how exquisite that is, and I can only hope that the Columbia Company will be rewarded for their enterprise with large sales. I must repeat once more: it is perfectly useless for people like ourselves to urge the production of better music unless the public will support that good music. I can assure them that we shall recommend no geese in this review, and if many of our swans turn out to be geese in the public estimation, we shall have to give up.

The most impressive work issued during the period under examination is Beethoven's C minor Symphony, conducted by Sir Landon Ronald and played by the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra (H.M.V. D-665, D-666, D-667, D-668). There is no doubt that solely from the point of view of recording this new version is the best issued so far. Actually I prefer the old rendering conducted by Nikisch with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, now taken out of circulation. Still, there were some disastrous noises on that, particularly in the famous opening bars of the first movement, which sounded like foghorns being let off by a mischievous boy. I am a confirmed romantic, and I prefer the more romantic interpretation of Nikisch to Sir Landon Ronald's. Sir Landon makes it altogether a much more practical affair, so much more practical that I have been tempted to transfer my allegiance from the Fifth Symphony to the Seventh Symphony, of which I possess a too much mutilated version conducted by Mr. Albert Coates and issued in France. I have also two records of the finale of the Fifth Symphony, conducted by Toscanini. These have been published in America and Italy, but not in England. I think that Toscanini's small orchestra is the most effective of all on the gramophone. If a Beethoven fanatic will give himself the trouble to order these two discs, he will find them listed in the Italian catalogue, Nos. 3-0615 and 3-0616; and if he is content to wait for about six months while the French fool about with them in transit, and if he does not fear embarking on a long correspondence with the pompous buffoons who run the English customs, and if he will pay the exorbitant duty of 33½ per cent., he will one day have his reward. If he is wealthy enough, patient enough, and fond enough of music, he might order at the same time a *Gagliarda* by Vincenzo Galilei (3-0600), the Finale of Beethoven's First Symphony (3-0639), and the Third Movement and the Finale of Mozart's Symphony in E flat major (3-0596 and 3-0595).

I have had a fatiguing time comparing Strauss' symphonic poem, "*Don Juan*" (H.M.V. D-670, D-671) conducted by Mr. Albert Coates and played by the Symphony Orchestra with the records (L-1419, L-1420) issued by the Columbia Company and conducted by the composer. The only result has been to sicken me thoroughly of the music itself and to

make me regret the wasting of two more records on it, when so much good music remains still to be recorded. I feel the same about Mme. Tetrassini's singing of the "Shadow Song" from "*Dinorah*" (H.M.V. 2-053207), which is nothing like so good as Mme. Galli-Curci's (H.M.V. 2-053134). Finally, while on the subject of repetitions, I cannot see why it was necessary to complicate for the public the difficulty of choice by issuing another record of the Sextet from "*Lucia*." The record published in 1908 (H.M.V. 054205) showed off Caruso at his best; and with Scotti as the baritone and Sembrich as the soprano, he was never seriously troubled to hold his own. In a later record (H.M.V. 2-054067) with Galli-Curci as the soprano and De Luca as the baritone, Caruso was completely laid out by Galli-Curci and had to bellow violently to assert himself. In the present record (H.M.V. 2-054034) Caruso does not have to bellow quite so loudly, but he bellows loudly enough; and, with Amato a much harsher baritone than De Luca and Tetrassini a much weaker soprano than Galli-Curci to support him, I prefer the second record with all Caruso's outrageous bellowing at the close. It is worthy of remark that Journet sings the chief bass part in all three records.

One cannot blame the gramophone companies too much for this repetition in their celebrity records, because these repetitions are the fault of the celebrities' jealousy; the sooner contracts are made which allow them to be dictated to like humbler performers by the musical advisers of the company, the better it will be for the public. I shall have some more to say on this subject next month in an article on fiddlers and violinists.

Another orchestral number published by H.M.V. (D-658) has a delightful overture by Glinka on one side, and "*The Dance of the Tumblers*" from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera "*The Snow Maiden*" on the other. This is an exceptionally good piece of recording and shows off at his best Mr. Coates as a conductor. I give this record full marks. I also give full marks to "*Jupiter*" from Gustav Holst's suite, "*The Planets*" (Col. L-1459). This is richly orchestrated for two piccolos, two flutes, three oboes, a cor anglais, three clarinets in B flat, one bass clarinet in B flat, three bassoons, one double bassoon, six horns in F, four trumpets in C, two tenor trombones, one bass trombone, one tenor tuba in B flat, one bass tuba, six timpani, triangle, tambourine, cymbals, bass drum, glockenspiel, two harps, and the usual strings. The horns have perhaps most to do, and they come out of their task splendidly on this record.

Another good orchestral record is Granville Bantock's "*Pierrot of the Minute*" (Col. L-1463). In fact, it seems to me that, more than any other company during the first quarter of 1923, the Columbia has advanced all along the line, due not only to their new wax, but also to leaving the beaten

track of recording. I am sorry that I cannot report any orchestral records of any kind, good or bad, from the Vocalion Company, and their absence is not atoned for by the Peer Gynt suite played by the band of the 1st Life Guards. It is time that the Peer Gynt suite was given a rest.

On the other hand, the Edison Bell Company have issued at popular prices some remarkably good Velvet Face records of the orchestra. I should be inclined to say that Mendelssohn's "Hebrides" Overture (V.F. 503) is the best of these, and it is certainly the best record I know of a very lovely piece of music. On the other side is Sibelius' tone poem, "Finlandia," the popularity of which I have never been able to understand. Full justice is done to it by the Royal Symphony Orchestra, and I think this 12in. double-sided record at 5/6 is wonderful value. Other orchestral records of this company at the same price include Mr. Goossens' orchestra in the "Meistersingers" Overture (V.F. 523) and Saint Saëns' "Danse Macabre" (V.F. 521), both of which are as good if not better than any other records of these pieces. On the other hand, the "Midsummer Night's Dream" Overture (V.F. 527) with the same orchestra is comparatively a failure. The wretched wood-wind at the beginning goes wrong as usual, but, apart from that, the whole interpretation lacks romantic charm. There is an excellent record, practically complete, of Nicolai's "Merry Wives of Windsor" (V.F. 512) by the British Symphony Orchestra with the late Raymond Roze conducting. I hope that the Velvet Face people will now turn their attention to some less hackneyed pieces; such records as Goossens' "Four Conceits" (V.F. 1042) and the "Russian Dances" (V.F. 1040) also conducted by Mr. Goossens and his orchestra, are the kind of thing I mean. Music like this published at 3/6 for a 10in. record is going to help the public to extend its circle of appreciation. But I wish much more fervidly that this company would devote a little attention to chamber music. Why don't they give us one or two complete quartets of Schubert, or the exquisite E flat major trio, or perhaps first of all the great pianoforte quintet? I ask for Schubert particularly, because this seems the moment to ram a little more Schubert down the throats of the public. I cannot congratulate His Master's Voice upon letting Mr. Goossens conduct the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra in a selection from "Madame Butterfly" (H.M.V. D-659). It is not fair to Mr. Goossens, to the orchestra, to Puccini, or the public. *Trop de beau style pour des prunes*, or if you like, breaking "Madame Butterfly" upon a wheel. Nor do I congratulate the Columbia Company upon the record of Mr. Goossens conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in the "Crown Diamonds" Overture (Col. 918), because it is not worth powder and shot, and because the powder used is damp and the shot

old tinctacks. In other words, the record is not a good one.

Of the two selections from "Lilac Time" I prefer the method of the Columbia Company (Col. 919) and the manner of His Master's Voice (H.M.V. C-1098). In other words, I prefer Mr. Herman Finck's conducting to Mr. G. W. Byng's; but I prefer Mr. Byng's orchestra to Mr. Finck's. There is too much brass in the Columbia selection, while the clarinet behaves itself much better than usual under Mr. Byng. There is no question that the rhythm of the Columbia version is far better; but I think that on the whole I shall give my vote to the H.M.V. version.

The singing of the first quarter of this year is well up to the average, but not specially exciting. The best vocal record is the "Spanish Serenade" sung by Michele Fleta (H.M.V. 2-062009). This is only the third record issued of the young Spanish tenor, and I fancy that he may come to be regarded as the Caruso of the younger generation. Certainly none of Caruso's records since some time before the war are as good as this. I had no sooner written these words than I put on the last Caruso record issued (H.M.V. 2-05224), "Mia Picciarella," from "Salvator Rosa," the opera of the Brazilian Gomez, and I thought how after all, whatever his faults of taste—and they are exceptionally gross for a great artist—Caruso did manage to get his personality as well as his voice through the soundbox. In a future number I shall examine this question of personality of singers coming out on the gramophone as distinct from their singing. Mlle. Lucrezia Bori will not do herself much good with Thomas Moore's "When Love is Kind," for it has been already much better sung by Mme. Alma Gluck. It will be a great pity if Mlle. Bori spends the next few years in singing all over again the arias and songs already sung by other sopranos. She has a beautiful voice, very pure and liquid, and the best thing she can do now is to give us some songs that nobody else has sung. How much more desirable is the delicious little air from "Cosi fan tutti." She has exactly the quality of voice and mode of singing required for Mozart's operatic arias, and I greatly hope that she will give us more records like H.M.V. 7-53054. It is about time somebody sang "The Queen of the Night" music for the gramophone. Yes, mademoiselle, let us have more Mozart and less Moore.

The painful shunting from the lower to the upper register that apparently has to occur in all contralto songs makes it difficult for me to be enthusiastic about any contralto. If only composers would let them take the low road and leave to others the high road, instead of jumping them up and down like marionettes at the end of a wire, we should all be the happier for it. That is one of the things I complain about in composers, that so much of their music seems actuated by personal spite against the

singer. Miss Leila Megane jumps from the low road to the high road and back with less apparent strain than most contraltos, but before I can write a final opinion about her voice I should like to hear her in something with a less attractive accompaniment than Sir Edward Elgar's "Sea Pictures" (H.M.V. D-674, D-675) or the two dull French songs on E-271.

What a perfect *lieder* singer Mme. Hempel is. I ought to have coupled "Wohin" (H.M.V. 7-43043) with Michele Fleta's serenade (H.M.V. 2-062009) as the two best vocal records of the first quarter of 1923. Nothing more exquisite than this song of Schubert's is imaginable.

I do not know how popular Mme. Frances Alda's records are in this country, but I do know that every record of hers issued by His Master's Voice is perfect. She has ease, richness, purity, strength, and taste. The singing of Marguerite's song in Boito's "Mefistofele," "L'altra notte in fondo al mare" (H.M.V. 2-053185) is one of the loveliest discs obtainable. This quarter we have her rendering of "Ancora un passo," from "Madame Butterfly" (H.M.V. 7-53046), and as always with Mme. Alda it is perfectly given. Chaliapine's song of "The Viking Guest," from "Sadko" (H.M.V. 2-022017), is not one of his best records, and I am a little disappointed by both the records from "Hänsel und Gretel" (H.M.V. 7-44010 and 2-044001). Mme. Homer is my favourite contralto and Mme. Gluck is one of my favourite sopranos. All the other records I possess of duets by these two singers I count among my prizes. Both these songs are great favourites of mine, and yet somehow the result is disappointing. Mme. Gluck seems shrill and too strenuously dramatic. I was expecting to give full marks here; but I am afraid both records will have to go into the second class, if we compare them with other duets by Gluck and Homer.

Songs from the Columbia Company include Dame Clara Butt singing "Barbara Allen" (Col. X-263), of which the less I say the better, for the singer's bad phrasing and inability to grasp that words mean something prevent my appreciating the quality of sound she emits. Mr. Norman Allin achieves some remarkable dramatic effects with his rendering of "The Ballad of Edward" (L-1466), but his voice is displeasing to me, and so much dramatic fervour issuing from a box affects me with the same kind of embarrassment I feel at having to listen to a reciter. The duet, "Oh, that we two were Maying!" (Col. D.1448), sung by Miss Labette and Mr. Hubert Eisdell, will presumably be popular, but it is the kind of singing, the kind of music, and the kind of words that I simply cannot stand. By far the best vocal records issued by the Columbia Company this quarter are the "Five Cautionary Tales" of Hilaire Belloc, set to music by Liza Lehmann (3224, 3225, 3226). The delightful piano accompaniment and

the voice are both perfectly recorded, and Mr. Harold Williams is to be congratulated on the clarity of his diction. I have played them over and over again and each time with more enjoyment.

The Vocalion Company has published a very large number of songs, some of which are good, most of which are moderate, and one or two of which are appalling. Mr. Eric Marshall gives what, if he had a better Italian pronunciation, would be a first-class rendering of "Non più andrai" (C-01085), and with a much better French accent he sings "Promesse de mon avenir" from Massenet's "Roi de Lahore" extremely well (C-01088). Miss Destournel gives a charming, but not inspired performance of "Deh! vieni, non tardar" (C-01087).

It was a good idea of the Vocalion Company to publish on the other side of some of their records an explanatory note, but if the public is to be instructed, it must be instructed seriously and not in the manner of a skit by the late H. G. Pélissier. I have had many a good laugh from these introductory notes, but I do not fancy that they were intended to be comic. "Figaro," for example, is not pronounced "Figáro," and "Non più andrai" is not pronounced, even by Mr. Eric Marshall during his most English moments, to rhyme with "day." By the way, I do not want to suggest that Mr. Marshall's Italian pronunciation is painful. It is, as a matter of fact, what Italians call *molto carino*, but what may be *carino* now when he is young will become far from *carino* later on, and he is too good a singer not to give himself the extra trouble to pronounce his Italian properly, and by doing so at the same time improve his singing. *Bel canto* simply means good singing. It does not mean, as many musical critics seem to think, juggling with a dead language by the ghost of a ventriloquist.

One of the best Vocalion records of the last quarter is "When other Lips," from "The Bohemian Girl" and "Let me like a Soldier Fall," from "Maritana" (R-6101). Both songs are extremely well recorded and accompanied, and Mr. Frank Titterton has a good, honest, straightforward voice with no affectations and no sopiness, which gives him a high place among English tenors. His duet with Mr. Malcolm McEachern in that ridiculous song "Watchman! What of the Night?" (D-02089) is excellent. On the other side of this record Mr. McEachern sings "The King's Minstrel" to a very well-recorded harp accompaniment. I have a constitutional dislike of rolling English basses; but there is no doubt that, if you do like them, Mr. McEachern is a splendid example. Another good bass record is V.F. 1044 by Mr. Harry Brindle, "Drink to me only with Thine Eyes," and on the other side that intolerable song, "Drinking." An even better record is V.F. 534 by the same singer of "When the King went Forth to War," and that dreary song of Gounod's from "La Reine de Saba," "She alone Charmeth my Sadness."

I liked the duet of Margaret Balfour and Hardy Williamson (Voc. R-6104), "Home to our Mountains," from "Il Trovatore"; and up to a point I liked Lenghi-Cellini (Voc. L-5034) singing "Addio, Mignon"; but I should like him much better if he would get rid of that tremolo which he uses in every record I have heard of his. He has a sympathetic and clean voice, and there is no earthly reason to fiddle with it like a trick violinist at the Coliseum. Another song to be mentioned this quarter is "D'amor sull' ali rosee," sung by Claudia Muzio (Actuelle 10375). It seems careless to print the title on the label "D'amore sul ald rosse." The Velvet Face Company have a pleasant record by Mr. John Perry of "The Prize Song," from the "Meistersingers," and "Your Tiny Hand is Frozen," from "Bohème" (V.F. 531). I have left to the last the new baritone introduced by the Velvet Face Company, Ugo Donarelli (V.F. 532). I am loath on the strength of hearing one record to condemn a singer, and I am inclined to think that some of the fault may lie in the recording. Donarelli sounds to me like a bass trying to be a baritone. He is certainly more at ease in his low notes. He has chosen to make his debut in "Largo al factotum" and "Credo in un dio crudel," both of which songs demand superlative singing if a new recording of them is to compete with records in the past by many great singers. I shall wait until I hear other records before I commit myself to a final opinion, but at the moment I am not impressed. I have forgotten to mention two really excellent records by Mr. Sidney Harrison of "Caravan" and other songs (Voc. M-1095 and M-1100). Several more pretentious tenors could learn much from him. These songs are frankly popular, but they are none the worse for that. Nobody objects to what is

frankly popular, provided that it be good so far as it goes, and these records are really good.

Piano records of the last quarter include a very fine Moiseivitch (H.M.V. D-676), one of the best I have heard, of Chopin's "Nocturne in E minor" and Rubinstein's "Barcarolle in F minor"; also an excellent Lamond (H.M.V. D-661) of the lovely minuet from Beethoven's Sonata op. 31, No. 3, with a pleasant little piece, "L'Alouette" of Glinka, on the other side. But the Rachmaninoff record (H.M.V. 5677) of a Bizet minuet is horribly dull and tinny. Why on earth Rachmaninoff should want to waste his time arranging this commonplace minuet for the piano, and why when he had arranged it he should want to play it, I cannot imagine.

The Vocalion Company have issued a pleasant record by Mlle. Darré (K-05062), and a very attractive record of Mr. Herbert Fryer playing an Étude and Prelude of Chopin on one side and the delicious "Prophet Bird" of Schumann on the other (Voc. X-9173). I wish we could get more Schumann on the gramophone. I am getting sick of eternal Chopin. The Sapellnikoff record from the Vocalion Company (R-6106) is an excellent one, but oh dear, oh dear, what dull pieces to play!

What I should like to say about the violin records that are being offered by the great fiddlers at the present moment must wait for another number. Meanwhile, let me bring the review of this quarter to a close with compliments and thanks to Mrs. Gordon Woodhouse for a perfect harpsichord record (H.M.V. E-275), and let us forget what stale food the fiddlers and violoncellists have served up, well cooked though it has been.

Z.

THE FIRST WAGNER SUPPLEMENT of HIS MASTER'S VOICE

IT is a widely diffused superstition among gramophone enthusiasts in England that American records are better than English records. Not only is this not the case—and if anybody is still sceptical, let him compare English pianoforte records with American pianoforte records to measure his own country's superiority—but the choice of music offered by the English companies is, without any exception, at least ten times as attractive as that offered by any other country. The three great English companies, His Master's Voice, Columbia, and Vocalion, has each of them its counterpart in

America, and H.M.V. has of course, in addition to that, companies in nearly every country in Europe. The result of looking through the various catalogues is to congratulate oneself on having the good fortune to be catered for in England. The Victor Company in America, which is the equivalent of H.M.V., supplies us in England through their associate firm with all that is best in their catalogue; but I do not think, after a most careful examination of their catalogue, that the American public is well enough educated musically to extend reciprocal support to our best. Operatically the two countries stand

level in the quality of their wares; but when it comes to chamber music and orchestras the inferiority of America is really ludicrous. The oases in the desert of American catalogues are few and far between; and though I am shamefully conscious of the vile passion of the English nation for what are called ballads, I realise that in America this passion has become a vice. In the same way, both the catalogues of the English Vocalion and the English Columbia companies are much more attractive than those of their American counterparts; and not only are the English catalogues better, but they are improving every day, whereas in the American supplements I perceive no sign of grace. I have already referred in my review of the first quarter of 1923 to a temporary set-back in the kind of music offered by the Vocalion Company, but I sincerely hope that this is only temporary and that later on this year we shall see them holding their own. Nobody wants great firms to be philanthropists, and certainly not philanthropists for the sake of a minority, but no nation responds more quickly than the English to what is really good, and, alas, I am bound to add, no nation is more tolerant of what is really bad. The natural kindness of the English is most unhappily extended to bad works of art, and so powerful is the poison of bad art that the supply unfortunately creates the demand. I am perfectly convinced of the fundamental falsity of the old economic saw to the contrary, in everything except what is purely practical.

At the present moment we are in the midway of the effect of various changes in old educational methods and of the extension of education to circles where formerly education did not penetrate. The ultimate advantages to the race are obvious enough, but the danger of the moment is superficiality, cocksureness, and ease of assimilation. Such a work as Mr. H. G. Wells' *History of Mankind* has done an immense amount of practical good, but it has done almost as much practical harm. The education of women in its present state is a dangerous factor. Women have a quickness of wit that threatens scholarship; and while they are almost entirely incapable of formulating a generalisation, they are always the readiest victims of a generalisation made for them. It was my lot 20 years ago to coach a certain number of young women for an examination, and the horrid impression that their credulity made upon me has remained in my mind ever since like a nightmare. They simply could not resist being thought for. That is one of the faults of modern methods of education. The fact is that we are being thoroughly Americanized. Children nowadays are being so carefully guarded from the pain and displeasure incident to learning, there are so many delightful new inventions for being taught without tears, there is such a contempt for the uses of austerity, there are such pretty and convenient

shortcuts being discovered, that humility, not merely toward art but toward life itself, no longer exists. One observes this tendency in music, in poetry, and in painting. I have no quarrel with anybody who prefers Mr. Arnold Bennett as a novelist to Sir Walter Scott; but if I find that such a person has never read Sir Walter Scott, or the equivalent of Sir Walter Scott, I turn from him with something like abhorrence, supposing that his taste cannot possibly be held a matter for serious consideration. The only excuse for writing at all any work primarily designed to entertain is that the writer should be able to reproduce some peculiar quality of the moment, which is to be added to, not substituted for, the sum of the human experience that went to make him what he is. Pretty passages on glockenspiel and celesta do not compensate for poverty of invention. One of the most painful phenomena of the present day is to find young people striving to be humble in the presence of Stravinski and dismissing Beethoven as not worth while. For myself I prefer people that are content to find the expression of their dreams in such piffle as *Watchman! What of the Night?* If I had my way, I would stop all modern music being published for the gramophone, all modern novels being circulated in libraries, and all modern pictures being exhibited except on payment of an exorbitant admission fee. When printing was invented, it was the treasure of the past that was given to the world in a new and convenient form.

All this is by way of preface to offering our warmest congratulations to His Master's Voice on the first special supplement of the Wagnerian masterpieces which the company has issued. We have just reached the point when Wagner can no longer be considered modern, and we are now in a position to realise that not a single one of his successors has added anything to what he set out to do for music. Opinions may differ about Wagner. I am only just emerging from a decade of hating Wagner and everything that Wagner ever did; a hatred I have now transferred to Scriabine. No doubt, in another 20 years, if God will and if His Master's Voice issue (perhaps) a special Scriabine supplement, I shall have reached a final opinion about him. The issue of these Wagner records is exactly what is wanted at the moment, and they represent the high-water mark of recording achievement. I must have played them through already a dozen times and I think, after the various experiments with needles and soundboxes, that I can call them really flawless.

The following is a list of the records:

THE RHINEGOLD.

D-677.—(a) ALBERICH STEALS THE GOLD: THE DAWN OVER VALHALLA (Scene 2). *Vocalists*: Robert Radford and Female Trio. *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

D-677.—(b) THE DESCENT TO NIBELHEIM: CAPTURE OF ALBERICH (Scene 3). *Vocalists*: Robert Radford and Edith Furredge. *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

I suggest that those who buy these records and have not yet acquired an earlier and as good record (D-503) of THE ENTRY OF THE GODS INTO VALHALLA, played by the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra, should get it now and play it after D-677.

THE VALKYRIE.

D-678.—(a) PRELUDE: SIEGMUND SEEKS SHELTER FROM THE STORM (Act 1). *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

D-678.—(b) SIEGMUND SEES THE SWORD HILT IN THE TREE. *Vocalist*: Tudor Davies. *Conductor*: Eugene Goossens.

D-679.—(a) SIEGMUND GREETES THE SPRING NIGHT. *Vocalist*: Tudor Davies. *Conductor*: Eugene Goossens.

D-679.—(b) SIEGMUND DRAWS OUT HIS SWORD. *Vocalist*: Tudor Davies. *Conductor*: Eugene Goossens.

D-680.—(a) (Act 2) INTRODUCTION: BRÜNNHILDE'S BATTLE CRY. *Vocalists*: Florence Austral and Robert Radford. *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

D-680.—(b) WOTAN WARNS BRÜNNHILDE NOT TO DISOBEY. *Vocalists*: Florence Austral and Robert Radford. *Conductor*: Eugene Goossens.

D-681.—(a) BRÜNNHILDE FORETELLS SIEGMUND'S DEATH. *Vocalists*: Florence Austral and Tudor Davies. *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

D-681.—(b) (Act 3) INTRODUCTION: RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES. *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

D-682.—(a) BRÜNNHILDE GIVES SIEGLINDE THE BROKEN SWORD. *Vocalists*: Florence Austral, Edith Furredge and Edward Hellard. *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

D-682.—(b) BRÜNNHILDE IMPORES THE PROTECTION OF FIRE. *Vocalists*: Florence Austral and Robert Radford. *Conductor*: Eugene Goossens.

3-0781.—WOTAN BIDS FAREWELL TO BRÜNNHILDE. *Vocalist*: Clarence Whitehill. *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

3-0780.—WOTAN KISSES BRÜNNHILDE INTO A DEEP SLUMBER. *Vocalist*: Clarence Whitehill. *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

3-0782.—THE ROCK IS SURROUNDED BY FIRE: FINALE OF OPERA. *Vocalist*: Clarence Whitehill. *Conductor*: Albert Coates.

I think that it was a mistake to let Mr. Robert Radford sing Wotan in D-680 and D-682 (b). Wotan is a baritone's part, and though the voice of Mr. Robert Radford has a wonderful compass, it is asking too much from his higher register to hold out against the tremendous orchestra, such an orchestra as no singer has ever yet had to sing through for the gramophone. Moreover, unless one separates the Rhinegold record from the rest of the series, one is going to get a first impression of Wotan as Alberich, which is rather hurtful to the dramatic effect; and if the Rhinegold record is to be played as something quite apart from the rest, it would have been best to issue it as a separate record and not in

this supplement at all. This is perhaps being hypercritical; but one is so anxious that the enterprise of His Master's Voice should be richly rewarded that one does not want to leave a loophole for any kind of pernicky criticism. Another very minor point is that record 3-0781 comes before record 3-0780. If it were possible to number these in their correct order, it would be better. I think that the singer who comes out best is undoubtedly Mr. Tudor Davies. All the three Wotans give the listener uneasy moments by making him feel that the orchestra is going to be too much for them, and in record 682 (a) Miss Austral gives him two uneasy moments when he may think that she is going to be too much for the orchestra.

These records want extremely careful playing. Fibre needles should be absolutely barred; of that there is no question. On the whole, I think that the ordinary H.M.V. loud-toned needle is—as it ought to be—the best exponent. For a long time I alternated between the Superphone soundbox and the Sonat, and I feel fairly sure that in finally choosing the Sonat I have chosen the best. I have not yet succeeded in overcoming the two bad shrieks by Miss Austral in record 682 (a) on this soundbox, but I fancy that I shall do so presently by getting the needle adjusted. The Ride of the Valkyries (D-681 b) is superb on the Sonat; not one blast from the piccolo, though it blasted on every other soundbox, and worst of all on the H.M.V. Exhibition. Clarinets and sopranos on the Sonat want very careful handling.

Incidentally, I do strongly recommend this game with soundboxes to the gramophone public. They cost comparatively little and afford endless amusement and discussion. It is impossible to say that any one of them is best for everything, and to find what each one is best for is splendid practice for intelligent listening to an orchestra. A few nervous individuals might be driven into a lunatic asylum earlier than otherwise by this form of amusement, but on the whole it is a safe enough pastime.

To come back to the records, I think that D-678 and 679 must be given first prize, for in these, as I have said, Mr. Tudor Davies never gives one a moment's apprehension. The orchestral effects right through are miraculous. The time and trouble and money it must have cost to secure such recording leaves one breathless, if one knows the amount of time, trouble, and money it takes to record any idiotic dance you choose to play on any jazz band. There is a little pamphlet issued by His Master's Voice which is an admirable piece of exposition, and the price of the whole supplement, £3 7s. 6d., works out at about 4/6 for each item. Yes, this was just the moment to publish a Wagner supplement, and it makes such a composition as Strauss's Don Juan look and taste like a badly made wedding-cake.



List of NEW ZONOPHONE RECORDS

Supplement No. 3 (March-April, 1923)

- 12-inch Double-Sided 5/-
BLACK DIAMONDS BAND
A. 270 Coppelias Selection, Part 1- — Coppelias Selection, Part 2
MAX DAREWSKI (Piano Solo)
A. 271 Valse de Concert — In an Eastern Garden
- 10-inch Double-Sided 3/-
BLACK DIAMONDS BAND
2299 Tricks—Fox Trot — When the leaves come tumbling down—
Fox-Trot
- SYDNEY COLTHAM, with Piano
2300 I pitch my lonely Caravan — Life and Death
FOSTER RICHARDSON, with Orchestra
2301 O, Falmouth is a fine Town — The Viking Song
STUART VAUGHAN, with Orchestra
2302 Just a little love song — Loving
HARRY FAY, with Orchestra
2303 William the Conk. — Have you paid the rent?
MAX DAREWSKI & STROUD HAXION
(Piano and Violin with effects)
2304 Ting Ling (Me lovee you)—Fox-trot — Ka-lu-a—Fox-Trot
INSTRUMENTAL QUINTETTE
2305 Serenade de Mandolines—The Dance of the Moonbeam Fairies
GEORGE FORMBY (The Late), with Orchestra
2306 I've lost my wife — We all went home in a Cab
ALBERT WHELAN, with Orchestra
2307 { The Bee and the Butterfly (Descriptive)
The Three Trees (Descriptive)
SAM MAYO, with Orchestra
2308 Things are worse in Russia — Ha - Ha
THE DORIAN SINGERS, unaccompanied
2309 Moonlight on the Lake — Drink to me only with thine eyes
EMBASSY DANCE ORCHESTRA
2310 Kitten on the Keys—Fox-Trot — Loving as we do—Fox-Trot

ZONOPHONE RECORDS

REVIEW of APRIL RECORDS

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.683.—D.684.—**Brandenburg Concerto in G, and Air on the G String.**

The most important place among the April records must be given to the first record which has been made of an orchestral piece by Bach. It is surprising that the Brandenburg Concerti and the Orchestral Suites, which are so admirably suited to the recording room, have not been given us before. Bach's genius was perhaps best able to express itself in vocal and orchestral works. A polyphonic style is not naturally adapted to a key-board instrument, on which it is difficult if not impossible to bring out the inside voices. In this concerto, written for nine instruments, he is at his best, and the records must be considered as the most important rendering of Bach that is available on the gramophone.

The recording is of the highest quality, and the only criticism I have to offer of Mr. Goossens' conducting is that perhaps he allows his youthful exuberance rather to run away with him. The orchestra used, though considerably larger than that for which the concerto was written, is by no means large, and it is no doubt partly due to this wise limitation of size that the result is so clear and comprehensible. It would be an interesting experiment to record one of these concerti with the very small chamber orchestra of the period at which they were written.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—05714.—**Paderewski** (Pianoforte). **Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 10** (Liszt).

To anyone who has really heard Paderewski play the news that he has returned to the recording room will seem an event of the greatest importance. Those who know his playing only through the medium of the gramophone will be less interested, for they will remember the old records and how tedious they were to listen to—like an orchestra of banjos. But while Paderewski has been in the desert the technique of recording has improved, and his own has not declined nor his genius. He is still in most ways the greatest of living pianists, and he shows his powers to perfection in this Hungarian Rhapsody. Liszt was eminently a writer of pianistic music. He and Chopin, each in his own way, understood the possibilities of the piano as no one else has understood them. He has been reproached with turning the piano into an orchestra, but he showed that it was one of the characteristics of the piano that it could be turned into an orchestra, and half the later writers have imitated him. As recording this is one of the most successful reproductions of the piano tone. There is still just a trace of the old twang we know so well, but a judicious choice of needle and soundbox will reduce it, so that if one sits at a reasonable distance it is almost as if Paderewski himself were playing, not quite on a Steinway perhaps, but on that home-grown instrument which has done duty on most London concert platforms. And of how many piano records can one say so much?

COLUMBIA.—L.1467, L.1468.—**Danzas Fantasticas** (Turina); **New Queen's Hall Orchestra** conducted by **Sir Henry Wood.**

Both Sir Henry Wood and the Columbia company are to be commended for these records of a composer almost unknown in this country. It is a relief to find conductors deserting the beaten track, even when they give us less charming things than these dances. For certain orchestral pieces creep into our collections like dry-rot. I take out a record of, say, the "Volga Boatmen's Song," and on the back I find "Coppelia," or of the Intermezzi from "Carmen," and without the least in the world wanting it, I find "Sylvia." It would be amusing to make a list of all the records available of the "Coppelia" and "Sylvia" music, the "Midsummer Night's Dream" overture and the Peer Gynt suite; and probably the end is not yet. The "Danzas Fantasticas" are unlike anything else that has been recorded. The Spanish idiom is unfamiliar in England, and these two excellent records of dances, which are really fantastic and really Spanish, should be in every representative collection of orchestral records. It is difficult to choose between the two, but on the whole I think I prefer the "Exaltacion."

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—2-053208.—**Galli-Curci** (Soprano). **Un bel di Vedremo** from "**Madame Butterfly**" (Puccini).

One of the most solid grounds I have for facing the coming of old age with equanimity is the reasonable hope that I shall spend it listening to as many records of la diva Galli-Curci's voice as there are of Caruso's. With nearly 200 of her records old age will hold few terrors. It will be the coloratura records that I shall prefer. I shall want to hear her sing "Casta Diva" and the "Queen of the Night," music from the "Magic Flute" as well as those she has already sung so divinely—"Come per me sereno," "Ah non credea mirarti," "Una voce poco fa" and the rest. After the really shameful parsimony of the Master's Voice company during the first three months of 1923, I was a trifle disappointed to get "Un bel di vedremo," but when I listen to her exquisite singing of it I am almost persuaded to think she is equally perfect in this more dramatic style as in pure coloratura—almost persuaded, but not quite. It is an enchanting record, but I feel sure that I shall be even more enchanted when I hear "Casta Diva" or the "Queen of the Night" aria.

COLUMBIA.—1470.—**Prelude in A major; Etude in G flat** (Chopin); **Prelude to Choral** (Bach-Busoni); **Scotch Slip** (Beethoven); **Busoni** (Piano).

No pianist expresses a more interesting personality than Busoni—interesting and disquieting. He has not the temperament of a Paderewski. It is a cynical and formidable intellect that deigns to communicate with us. Music, we feel, is one of the many possibilities of an exceptionally gifted intelligence, as painting was of Leonardo da Vinci. This man might have been a saint or a criminal or a mathematician; it happens that he is a musician. His personality survives even the double mechanism of the piano and the gramophone. This record is particularly welcome as, owing to his serious illness, admirers have been disappointed of a concert he was to have given. The record represents the latest development of piano recording; the scratch is almost entirely eliminated and the reproduction of the piano tone is much ahead of anything possible until recently.

The Instruments of the Orchestra:

COLUMBIA.—3198.—**Violin, Viola, 'Cello, Piccolo, Flute, Oboe.**

COLUMBIA.—3199.—**Cor Anglais, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, Contra-Bassoon, French Horn.**

COLUMBIA.—3200.—**Trumpet, Cornet, Trombone, Bass Trombone, Tuba.**

It might be argued that too close an acquaintance with the technical details would be apt to interfere with our appreciation of music, that the proper attitude ought to be one of mere passivity, that the listener should allow the waves of sound to break over him without any effort to analyse or even think about what it is that affects him. Actually most of us are so constituted that unless our minds have something to occupy them while listening to music, our attention is apt to wander into a world of day-dreams where only the most rudimentary consciousness of the music survives. A certain preoccupation with the methods by which the musician produces his effects is the best corrective of this tendency to go wool-gathering. With even a moderate amount of study anyone with an average ear can acquire sufficient practical knowledge of harmony to recognise the commoner individual chords and modulations and to identify the various instruments of the orchestra. It is as an aid to the latter of these two studies that the records under review are designed and very well designed. The principle adopted is to play the same piece of music on each of the different instruments. It is true that the result on some of the instruments sounds rather odd—one would hardly expect a phrase to be equally suited to the bass tuba and the piccolo—but the method is I think on the whole the best for making clear the exact differences of timbre between the instruments. There exists another set of records made on the plan of choosing for each instrument a passage written to bring out its characteristic qualities. The enthusiastic and enterprising student is recommended to acquire both.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—5-7986.—**Kreisler** (Violin) **Aucassin and Nicolette** (Kreisler).

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—E.279; E.280.—**Isolde Menges** **Sonata in D** (Handel).

Whether the violin is really suited to serious music is a point that might be debated. Anyhow some serious music has been written for the instrument, and unless someone will condescend to play it, it is impossible for the public to get to know it. Most virtuosi prefer to be fiddlers rather than violinists and confine themselves to little pretty trifles written to show off the qualities of the instrument. It is just such a trifle that Kreisler gives us. One admires, says "how nice," and never wants to hear it again. Miss Isolde Menges, on the other hand, is one of the few, and one of the best of that few, players who prefer to be violinists, and it is impossible to be too grateful to her for giving us things like this lovely Handel sonata which she plays with a real sense of style and an enchanting tone.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—2-043025.—**Maria Jeritza** (Soprano). **Einsam in trüben Tagen** ("Lohengrin") (Wagner).

This is the first record of a singer of whose beauty, dramatic talents, and singing those who have heard her in Vienna or New York have spoken always with respect and usually with enthusiasm. Frankly I am a little disappointed. Respect I do feel, not quite enthusiasm. Perhaps it is that Elsa's Dream was not a wise choice for this singer, but I thought there was a certain lack of quality in her upper notes. It is impossible, however, to make a judgment on one record, and I shall look forward with interest to further issues.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.685, D.686, D.687, D.688.—**"Polly,"** selected items by members of the original cast.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.689.—**"Polly,"** orchestral selections. **Kingsway Theatre Orchestra** conducted by **Frederic Austin**.

COLUMBIA.—3240, 3250.—**"Polly,"** orchestral selections. **Court Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Albert W. Ketelbey**.

"Polly" promises to be as successful as the "Beggar's Opera." On the gramophone I think it comes off better than the "Beggar's Opera." Among the singers Miss Lilian Davies deserves the honours. She has an enchanting voice, but not one word of what she sings can be understood. This is a serious fault in the singing of an opera like "Polly," but one which she could no doubt easily correct. Both records of orchestral selections are good. The Columbia Company uses the larger orchestra, and the result is rather louder and less well defined. Otherwise there is little to choose between them.

POPULAR RECORDS

Of all the popular records which are being produced at the present day those which surprise me most are the Imperials. The list includes records of almost all kinds—banjos, accordions, bells and other instruments, besides ballads and comic records and dances—and they are published at two shillings for a double-sided 10-inch record. This is astonishing value, as the records are admirably made. I confess to a distaste for comic records. To be a buffoon is one of the privileges of the human race, and I do not like to see even a dog making a fool of itself by "dying for its country" or some other silly trick; but there is something positively horrifying in seeing a machine indulge in buffoonery. When, however, I can get over this feeling and think of the human being behind the machine, I prefer the frankly low comedy of Mr. Billy Whitlock, on the Imperial records, in his rollicking and good-humoured turns "Outside Drury Lane" or "Pharaoh's Dream" to the dreary bourgeois facetiousness of, say, the Co-optimists. An American professor has, I believe, written a book to prove that there have been made, since the dawn of history, in all nineteen separate jokes, versions of most of which are found in pre-dynastic Egyptian tombs. I had not supposed there were so many. Even a superficial study of so vast a field would no doubt enormously enlarge the horizon of our writers of musical skits.

It would be an excellent thing if the manufacturers of the Imperial discs could get hold of a good amateur string quartet who would consent to work up a few pieces of serious music and be

recorded without being paid, just in order to hear what they sounded like. There might well be a demand for Mozart and Beethoven quartets among those who cannot afford more than two shillings for a record.

A NOTE ON SOME DANCE RECORDS

One of the most wide-spread uses of the gramophone is for providing dance music. Every month new and more exciting dance tunes are produced which, as they weary us, we discard for newer and still more exciting ones. For it is notorious that jazz tunes, admirable as they are, do soon become a burden. Where are "Beets and Turnips," "After you get what you want," "Swanee," and the rest? The gramophone is most convenient; no need to be too careful of the life of the records, you can wear them out and get the latest. Every dancer has his special favourites, and a record that will draw one man from a sick-bed will leave another unmoved at his evening paper. My own choice is for the performances of the Bar Harbour Society and Paul Whiteman's Orchestra. Perhaps the best records of all are "Ji-Ji-Boo" (Voc. 1102) and "Sixty Seconds every Minute" (Voc. 1109) by the Bar Harbour Orchestra and "Carolina in the Morning" (H.M.V. B1516) by Paul Whiteman's Orchestra. Other first-rate records are "Where Bamboo Babies Grow" and, on the other side, "Japanese Moon" (Actuelle 10378) and "Two little Ruby Rings" (Actuelle 10381).

On my machine I prefer the Actuelle dance records, which are needle-cut, to the phono-cut Pathé records. The latter do not make enough noise to be heard easily across a large room with a dozen couples dancing. The Imperial dance records at two shillings are quite as good as almost any of the more expensive kinds. Derrick's Band, as recorded by this company, is in fact one of the best dance orchestras I know of.

JAMES CASKETT.

We wish to give a general acknowledgment of the records which the different companies have sent for review. It had been intended to publish a complete list of these, but, at the last moment and after the list was in type, it has been found too long to be included. We hope in future to be able to publish each month a list of all records received.

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